



ESOMAR 26 QUESTIONS TO HELP BUYERS OF ONLINE SAMPLES

COMPANY PROFILE

1. What experience does your company have with providing online samples for market research?

Empathy Research is the research division of Empathy Marketing Ltd. which also owns Pigsback.com. We have exclusive access to the members of Pigsback.com for research purposes.

Since 2002, Empathy Research has been providing many Irish and UK market research agencies and clients with online samples. We also provide full service market research to clients directly.

SAMPLE SOURCE

2. Please describe and explain the types of source(s) for the online sample that you provide (are these databases, actively managed panels, direct marketing lists, web intercept sampling, river sampling or other)?

Empathy Research's primary source for its panel is Pigsback.com to which members are recruited through a range of marketing activities. These have a strong focus on field recruitment, using the brand mascot the pig, "Curly". Both male and female commuters are targeted by strongly branded promotional teams with premiums such as branded "stress pigs", key-rings etc. This leads consumers to the Pigsback.com site, where they can join free and receive a personalised website and emails.

We also have a dedicated marketing team who run a communications programme encompassing TV, radio, press, online advertising, and below the line activities for both Britain and Ireland. Our data base is an opt-in one and members are therefore defined as people who have chosen to sign up to Pigsback.com themselves.

3. What do you consider to be the primary advantage of your sample over other sample sources in the marketplace?

Our panel is not a research only panel, Pigsback.com is their raison d'être so they are not research junkies. We have strict rules around the frequency with which we send our members survey invitations to ensure they do not become sensitised to research over time.

4. If the sample source is a panel or database, is the panel or database used solely for market research?

The panel is not solely used for market research. It is an online club of consumers and brands where members interact with Pigsback.com on a regular basis.

5. How do you source groups that may be hard-to-reach on the internet?

We can pre screen members to ensure that the fit criteria that may be considered hard-to-reach on the internet. We can also target hard-to-reach members based on their activity on site. We can also identify these groups via data we capture during the registration process.

6. What are people told when they are recruited?

When members sign up to Pigsback.com, they can opt in to receive emails, including invitations to take part in research.

PANEL RECRUITMENT

7. If the sample comes from a panel, what is your annual panel turnover /attrition/ retention rate and how is it calculated?

We recruit an additional 10% per year and on average, attrition levels are approximately 4% per year. Thus the database grows in size year on year.

8. Please describe the opt-in process:

When members sign up to Pigsback.com, a double opt-in method is used. Our members can proactively go to the Pigsback.com website and register by filling in their name, gender, year of birth, where they live, other demographic details and an e-mail address. Pigsback.com then sends them an e-mail which contains a link to activate membership. If they do not click on this link they are not registered as members.

9. Do you have a confirmation of identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents at the time of registration with the panel?

Pigsback.com operates an in house system that identifies duplicate accounts and then deletes this duplicate account. Members are informed that these duplicate accounts have been deleted and recommend that they only use one account. We also verify participants' information within surveys themselves to check their details are correct. When we host surveys, we use personalised links which allow participants to take the survey once only.

10. What profile data is kept on panel members? For how many members is this data collected and how often is this data updated?

The following details are asked of members on registration: age, gender, region, number of children, marital status, level of income, occupation.

For all of our members we hold data related to age, gender, region and number of children.

Members' personal information is updated in a number of ways including:

Continuous updates: respondents are given the ability to update their personal information at any time.

Automatically: date information such as age is updated automatically on year change so as to remain accurate over time. Member Services emails are sent to members approximately 3 times a year, requesting that they update their details and incentivising them with PiggyPoints to do so. Demographic information is also validated by including screening questions within surveys.

New Registration Process: our new registration process is incentivised by PiggyPoints and gives existing and new members the opportunity to provide more demographic information about themselves.

11. What is the size and/or the capacity of the panel, based on active panel members on a given date? Can you provide an overview of active panellists by type of source?

Our panel has a total of 780,000 members in both Ireland and the UK, 470,000 in the UK, 283,000 in the Republic of Ireland and 27,000 in Northern Ireland.

100% of our members are classed as active, as we do not include inactive members in our panel numbers quoted. Active members are defined as those who have visited the Pigsback.com website within the past 12 months and any member for whom we have an email address that hasn't bounced. Our most active members are those recruited through referral from another member.

PANEL AND SAMPLE MANAGEMENT

12. Please describe your sampling process including your exclusion procedures if applicable. Can samples be deployed as batches/replicates, by time zones, geography, etc. If so, how is this controlled?

Every panel member has a unique member ID which we can use to specifically include or exclude them as required from a sample. Our members are targeted randomly from our database, based on the required criteria as agreed with the client. Our targeting process automatically removes any member who was targeted for a survey in the previous three weeks. In addition, we can apply further criteria e.g. removing members who have been targeted for a previous wave of a project.

We use a top tier mailing system capable of managing and scheduling sample deployment based on client requirements such as batches by time zone, region, and demographic split.

13.Explain how people are invited to take part in a survey. What does a typical invitation look like?

Respondents are invited to participate in a survey via email. We have access to a communications department comprised of copywriters who write creative subject lines and email copy which encourages members to participate in these surveys.

Members are offered PiggyPoints in both the subject line and the main body of the invitation email and are always assured of confidentiality and informed of the approximate time it takes to complete a particular survey.

14.Please describe the nature of your incentive system(s). How does this vary by length of interview, respondent characteristics, or other factors you may consider?

Respondents are incentivised by PiggyPoints, the rewards currency of Pigsback.com which can be redeemed against a number of rewards at differing values from mobile phone credit to money off vouchers for clothing shops. For certain surveys members can also be entered into a draw to win a particular prize. If respondents are screened out or have answered after a quota has been filled they are compensated by 10 PiggyPoints, therefore every respondent will be rewarded for trying to complete a survey when it is live. The number of PiggyPoints a participant receives for completing a survey varies depending on the length of the survey.

15.How often are individual members contacted for online surveys within a given time period? Do you keep data on panellist participation history and are limits placed on the frequency that members are contacted and asked to participate in a survey?

Members are target randomly and are not targeted if they have received a survey within a three week time period.

Yes, we keep data on panellist participation history. Panellists can be included or excluded based on surveys they have previously completed or screened out from. We do not invited members to participate in surveys more frequently than once every 3 weeks. We have a policy of not sending reminder emails.

POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

16.Is there a privacy policy in place? If so, what does it state? Is the panel compliant with all regional, national and local laws with respect to privacy, data protection and children e.g. EU Safe Harbour, and COPPA in the US? What other research industry standards do you comply with e.g. ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research, CASRO guidelines etc.?

Yes, we have a very strict privacy policy which is rigorously adhered to and it states:

Privacy Policy:

Safeguarding your privacy is our number one priority.

Because we gather some information about Pigsback.com members, we believe you should understand how that information might be used.

Here is our commitment to you:

- We will protect your confidentiality.
- We will NEVER release or sell your personal information to any other party.
- When we give information to the companies that participate in the Programme, it is in the form of grouped statistics based on members' information while participating in the Programme. The information typically includes the total number of visits, where are they coming from, what do they do on the website, etc. The Programme is designed to make it impossible for outside companies to extract personal information without your consent.
- We follow rigorous security protocols within our company to safeguard any personal information you share with us.

We comply with both the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, as well as ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research.

17.What data protection/security measures do you have in place?

Security Guarantee:

Our systems are housed in a state of the art data centre and they are constantly monitored against attempted intrusion and protected at all times against virus attacks and un-authorised access.

18.Do you apply a quality management system? Please describe it.

For direct client projects Empathy Research uses Conformat Software which abides by a range of measures that ensure compliance with current industry regulations and quality standards, particularly those relating to SAS 70 type II certification, ISO standards, and Safe Harbor certification for the European Data Protection Act.

19.Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, please describe the process for obtaining permission.

Empathy Research has a strict policy of not conducting market research with people aged below the age of 18.

PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTIPLE PANEL MEMBERSHIP

20.Do you supplement your samples with samples from other providers? How do you select these partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider? Do you de-duplicate the sample when using multiple sample providers?

Empathy Research does not supplement our samples with samples from other providers.

21. Do you have a policy regarding multi-panel membership? What efforts do you undertake to ensure that survey results are unbiased given that some individuals belong to multiple panels?

Empathy research does not currently exclude panellists who may be members of other research panel databases. We do ask panellists whether they have participated in surveys on similar topics in the past 6 months, and may exclude them on this basis, depending on project requirements.

DATA QUALITY AND VALIDATION

22. What are likely survey start rates, drop-out and participation rates in connection with a provided sample? How are these computed?

Response rates vary depending on the interest level and user friendliness of survey. They can range from 10% - 30%. The response rate is calculated by dividing the actual number of completes, screen-outs and quota fulls by the number of invitations sent. We also monitor the completion rate which is the actual number of completes divided by the number of invitations sent.

Generally, 80% respond within 24-48 hours. The 45+ age group as well as our more rural members, in particular, can take longer to respond.

Other factors that can affect response rates include:

The incidence rate:

How well the selection criteria have been pre-screened determines the amount of invites sent and respondents' likelihood of eligibility.

Survey quality:

Dropout rate is influenced by the length of the survey and the quality of the questionnaire.

Seasonal Activity:

E.g. Public/Bank holidays, school holidays – we do not send invitations on public or bank holidays or during the Christmas period.

23. Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your panellists? Are you able to supply your client with a per job analysis of such individual level data?

Yes, we can identify any individual member in our database and their recent participation history, date of entry and source. However we typically do not provide this level of information to panel partners, unless specifically requested.

24. Do you use data quality analysis and validation techniques to identify inattentive and fraudulent respondents? If yes, what techniques are used and at what point in the process are they applied?

We verify demographic information, including age, gender, region, occupation and presence of children, when participants take part in surveys. This ensures data quality and mitigates fraudulent respondents where possible.

25. Do you measure respondent satisfaction?

Yes, we ask our members for feedback on surveys on a regular basis and learn from their suggestions to continually improve their survey experience.

26. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?

For panel partners we can provide the number of reads their survey invitation has received and the number of survey invitations emailed to each criteria. We also discuss how the project went and any possible areas for improvement. During projects, we keep clients informed of any feedback we receive from participants in their survey.